

Guidelines for the Outreach Subcommittee of the MHASC

Draft #4

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I. Definition, Purpose, and Functions of the Subcommittee

- A. Definition: The Mile High Area Outreach Subcommittee (hereafter referred to as the Subcommittee) is a volunteer group of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. It exists to help overcome the isolation that hinders the growth and survival of our groups and individual members.
- B. Purpose: The focus and goal is to help NA groups and individuals feel a part of the larger NA community. Communication among the Outreach, Hospitals & Institutions, and Public Info subcommittees is suggested in order to avoid duplication of efforts. The Outreach Subcommittee of the MHASC (Mile High Area Service Committee) shall maintain effective communication and cooperation with the MHASC. Subcommittee meetings are open to all members of the NA fellowship.
- C. Functions
 - 1. To operate the Correspond-with-Inmates program which oversees NA members corresponding with inmates of prisons, jails, and other institutions who want to be penpals with a recovering addict.
 - 2. To operate the Adopt-a-Meeting program which supports new groups or existing groups that are struggling with attendance and/or finances.
 - 3. To reach out to groups in the Mile High Area which are not sending GSRs to Area and provide them with incentive to participate at the area level.
 - 4. To distribute NA literature to isolated individuals and groups.
 - 5. To educate the fellowship at large and train volunteers.
 - 6. To provide representation for participation in the MHASC.
 - 7. To coordinate the development of any new Outreach project.
 - 8. To communicate and disburse information to and from all volunteers.
 - 9. To elect or appoint members to fulfill the needs of the Subcommittee.
 - 10. To coordinate and work closely with the H&I and PI subcommittees to prevent overlapping of services and increase support among the subcommittees.
 - 11. To hold regularly scheduled monthly meetings.
 - 12. To maintain an archive of all minutes and correspondences.

III. Elected Positions: Structure, Qualifications, and Duties

A. Structure

1. The elected positions of the Subcommittee are Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. All positions are elected by a consensus of the Subcommittee. The exception is the Chairperson who is elected by the MHASC.
2. All terms of office are one year in duration with eligibility for a second term of one year, followed by two years of ineligibility for that position.
3. If an elected Subcommittee member becomes unable to discharge the duties of that position, a successor shall be nominated by the Chairperson and approved by the Subcommittee at the next business meeting. Should the Chairperson be unable to discharge the duties of that position, the Vice-Chairperson will automatically assume the position of the Chairperson until the next MHASC meeting where a new Chairperson will be elected.

B. Chairperson

1. The Chairperson is elected by the MHASC. (See “Guidelines of the Mile High Area Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous” Article VII Subcommittees, available in pdf format at <http://www.nacolorado.org/denver/trustedservants.html>.)
2. Responsibilities of the Chairperson include:
 - a. Being ultimately responsible for the Subcommittee fulfilling its promises to any addict who reaches out to the Subcommittee.
 - b. Supplying direction and vitality for the Subcommittee. Looking for ways to improve the effectiveness and range of service which the Subcommittee provides. Gather ideas and energy from other Subcommittee members, other recovering addicts, and other resources.
 - c. Assist in coordinating efforts by the Outreach, Hospitals & Institutions, and Public Info subcommittees to maximize effectiveness of effort.
 - d. Representing the Subcommittee at the monthly MHASC meeting and providing a report to MHASC of the Subcommittee’s activities.
 - e. Preparing an agenda for the monthly Subcommittee meeting and presiding at the meeting.
 - f. Overseeing the creation of an annual and quarterly Subcommittee budget to be submitted to the MHASC as outlined by the MHASC guidelines.
 - g. Ensuring the archives of minutes and correspondences are maintained.

C. Vice-Chairperson

1. It is suggested that the Vice-Chairperson have a minimum continuous clean time of one year.
2. Responsibilities of the position include:
 - a. Assuming the duties of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence.
 - b. If the office of Chairperson should become vacant, the Vice-Chairperson assumes the duties of the Chairperson until a Chairperson is elected or appointed by the MHASC.
 - c. Working closely with the Chairperson to become familiar with all aspects of the Chairperson's responsibilities.
 - d. Working with volunteers to ensure that they are trained and willing to meet their responsibilities.
 - e. Attending any Outreach meeting when applicable to observe and assist volunteers in carrying the message.

D. Secretary

1. It is suggested that the Secretary have a minimum continuous clean time of one year.
2. Responsibilities of the position include:
 - a. Recording minutes of all meetings of the Subcommittee and maintaining archives of prior meeting minutes and related materials.
 - b. Copying and distributing minutes from Subcommittee meetings.
 - c. Keeping current records of all Subcommittee members including addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.
 - d. Keeping records of all facilities, groups, and individuals served. Records should include facility guidelines, rules and regulations, meeting schedules, and contact information.
 - e. Being responsible for production of any fliers, etc.

E. Treasurer

1. It is suggested that the Treasurer have a minimum continuous clean time of one year.
2. Responsibilities of the position include:
 - a. Maintaining a simple set of accounting books for the Subcommittee; holding any petty cash; submitting fund disbursement requests to MHASC and collecting same; dispensing and spending funds as needed at the direction of the Subcommittee.
 - b. Acquiring and maintaining a stock of stamps and envelopes.
 - c. Performing a quarterly review of spending to ferret out any opportunities to reduce expenses.

IV. Correspond-with-Inmates Program

A. Purpose and Brief Description

1. The purpose of the Correspond-with-Inmates Program is for members of the NA program on the outside to reach out via written letter to inmates of institutions who are isolated from the day-to-day community of NA. By establishing correspondence with inmates, the NA members on the outside work their program by sharing their strength, hope, and experience with another addict; they keep what they have by giving it away. For the addicts behind walls, this program lets them learn more about the NA way of life and to gain access to the voices and spirits of people who have freed themselves from active drug use.
2. Every letter writer on the outside shall have a minimum of three months (90 days) continuous clean time.
3. The goal of the Subcommittee is that every letter sent by an inmate be answered within one month of the postmark date.
4. Sponsorship of an inmate is an option. (See “Sponsor Guidelines for the Sponsorship by Mail Program.”)
5. Women write women; men write men.
6. The program shall send NA-approved literature to inmates. Each institution’s rules for the receiving of written materials shall be complied with.

B. Correspondence Coordinator

1. It is suggested that the Correspondence Coordinator have a minimum continuous clean time of one year.
2. The Correspondence Coordinator shall have completed the training detailed in the “Outreach Letter Writing Training” packet.
3. Responsibilities of the Coordinator include:
 - a. The primary responsibility is to ensure that every letter sent by an inmate is answered within one month of the postmark date. This entails tracking and, if necessary, reassigning letters.
 - b. Ensure all volunteer correspondents have been trained.
 - c. Work with the secretary to maintain the contact information on the volunteer list.
 - d. Provide the correspondence volunteers with everything they need to meet their responsibilities.
 - e. Maintain the correspondence log.
 - f. Log and assign the letters from inmates to volunteers within the guidelines outlined in Part E. below.
 - g. Review the returned letters and mail to the inmate within two days of receiving it.

- h. Obtain the rules and requirements of each facility served and any other information the secretary may need for a facility.
- i. Mail NA literature to inmates as requested.

C. Correspondence Volunteers

1. Every volunteer correspondent shall have a minimum of three months (90 days) continuous clean time.
2. All volunteer correspondents will be trained using the "Letter Writers' Training Packet" before they may write any letters. Any relevant policies of the Subcommittee will be made known to the volunteer, and any special rules of a facility will be reviewed with the volunteer before they are assigned a correspondent from that facility.
3. Responsibilities of the correspondence volunteers include:
 - a. The primary responsibility is to mail the response to the inmate's letter to the Correspondence Coordinator within two weeks of getting the letter.
 - b. To communicate to the inmate the joy of life without drugs. To let the inmate know that they need never use again and that they are not alone in their struggle. Prayer and/or meditation before and during letter writing can be very effective.
 - c. Repeat: The correspondence volunteer should answer every letter assigned to him or her within two weeks of receiving it.

D. Volunteer List.

A volunteer list will be kept containing the following information:

1. The volunteer's name and contact info: mailing address, phone numbers, and email address.
2. The volunteer's clean date. While there is only a three-month clean time requirement, there is advantage when people with various clean times are assigned to correspond with a particular inmate. An inmate can benefit from a newcomer as well as someone with experience. Care should be taken to balance the responses when assigning volunteers.
3. The volunteer's anonymity preference. Some volunteers prefer not to be known by inmates who may be released in their area. In such cases, this should be noted on the volunteer list, so that care may be taken when assigning letters to that volunteer. Signing one's letters with initials or using a pen name can further protect one's anonymity.
4. List of H&I facilities visited by the volunteer. Most institutions require that H&I volunteers have no other contact with inmates beyond the meetings. Volunteers will not be assigned letters from inmates living in institutions which they visit.

5. Training received. Volunteers should not write letters until the Subcommittee has trained them.

E. The Correspondence Process

1. A log will be kept of all letters received by inmates, the post date, all volunteers assigned to answer that letter, all responses returned to the coordinator, and the date the response letter is sent to the inmate. It is important to track the responses from volunteers in order to ensure that each letter is answered within two weeks. The letter will be reassigned to a different volunteer if there is no response.
2. When a letter is received from an inmate, the Coordinator will assign it to at least two volunteer correspondents within one week. The Coordinator will take care to match the volunteer's sex and anonymity needs while balancing the amount of clean time of respondents. There is no harm in assigning the letter to many volunteers.
3. The volunteer will get a copy of the inmate's letter and a pre-addressed (with the Subcommittee's PO Box), pre-stamped return envelope.
4. When the Coordinator receives the response from the volunteer, it will be logged and reviewed.
5. Response letters will be reviewed to ensure agreement with the policies of the Subcommittee and the rules of the facility.
6. Passing letters between the Coordinator and volunteers can also be accomplished by email or in person. However, using the stamped envelope increases the chances of a rapid return.

V. Adopt-A-Group Program

A. Purpose and Brief Description

1. The Adopt-a-Group Program assists new groups and meetings in getting started. The Program assists existing groups and meetings that are struggling with attendance and/or financial constraints. The Program encourages groups to become active at the area, regional, and world levels of service.

B. Adopt-a-Group Coordinator

1. Suggested continuous clean time for the Coordinator is six months.
2. Responsibilities include:
 - a. Seek out groups and meetings that may be candidates for assistance.
 - b. Maintain the volunteer list.
 - c. Call to remind people of their commitment.
 - d. Prepare all sign-up lists and flyers.
 - e. Attend group consciences as required.
 - f. Follow all policies of the Subcommittee.
 - g. Maintain files with updated information concerning group registrations, group funding, start-up kits, and any other information pertinent to group support from throughout the service structure.

C. For New Groups Requesting Help Getting Started

1. The program should assist new groups in getting established with attendance, flyers, financing, literature, and encouragement to become active in the existing service structure.
2. Outreach will stay abreast of the procedures for registering a group with WSO, getting put on the regional meeting list, and getting put on the MHASC meeting list.
 - a. Help the group to understand their responsibilities and the procedures for keeping the meeting information up-to-date.
 - b. Help the group understand their role and responsibilities as members of MHASC as outlined in "A Guide to Local Services."
3. Assist the group in obtaining the starter kit from WSO.
4. Assist the group in making flyers and have fifty (50) copies available at the monthly MHASC business meeting.
5. Assist the group in obtaining the necessary literature, for example, "A Guide to Local Services," and "Treasurer's Workbook."
6. Assist the group in obtaining additional start-up funds from MHASC, if after assessing needs versus resources, it is apparent it will be needed.

D. For Groups Requesting Attendees

1. The goal is to arrange to have two or more members attend each meeting for a three-month period.
2. The Subcommittee will maintain a volunteer sign up sheet with contact information for members who are willing to commit to going to a meeting at least once in a three-month period.
3. The first month will be covered by Outreach volunteers on that list.
4. The second month will be covered by MHASC GSRs.

- a. Prepare a single sign up sheet with the meeting date, time, location, and directions. Have three blank lines next to each date on which the meeting will be held that month. Pass the sign-up sheet around the Area meeting asking GSRs to make a commitment to go one time by signing their name and contact info.
 - b. The program Coordinator will call the individuals from the above sign-up sheets two days before the meeting to remind them of their commitment, and to answer any questions about getting to the meeting.
 5. Oversee the creation of fifty (50) flyers for the meeting and pass them out at the Area meeting.
 - a. Encourage the group's trusted servants to design and create a flyer of their own, else the program coordinator will create a flyer. The Subcommittee can fund the making of copies if necessary.
 - b. The flyer should display the meeting date, time, location, directions, and whatever may serve as a motivation for service.
 - c. Be sure the NA and/or MHASC logo are displayed on the flyer.
- E. For Groups Requesting Help in Funding
1. Assist the group at their monthly business meeting in reviewing the 7th Tradition, IPs on self support and the basket, and WSO position papers.
 2. Be prepared with recent MHASC financial reports to assess the Area's ability to help the group financially.
 3. Assist the group in writing a motion for funding to be submitted at a monthly MHASC business meeting if a need is indicated.